

PMC-ND  
(1.08.09.13)

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY  
OFFICE OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND RENEWABLE ENERGY  
NEPA DETERMINATION**



**RECIPIENT:** Regents of the University of Minnesota

**STATE:** MN

**PROJECT TITLE :** Detection and Perception of Sound by Eagles and Surrogate Raptors

<b>Funding Opportunity Announcement Number</b>	<b>Procurement Instrument Number</b>	<b>NEPA Control Number</b>	<b>CID Number</b>
DE-FOA-0001554	EE0007881	GFO-0007881-001	

Based on my review of the information concerning the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer (authorized under DOE Order 451.1A), I have made the following determination:

**CX, EA, EIS APPENDIX AND NUMBER:**

Description:

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| <b>A9 Information gathering, analysis, and dissemination</b>                           | Information gathering (including, but not limited to, literature surveys, inventories, site visits, and audits), data analysis (including, but not limited to, computer modeling), document preparation (including, but not limited to, conceptual design, feasibility studies, and analytical energy supply and demand studies), and information dissemination (including, but not limited to, document publication and distribution, and classroom training and informational programs), but not including site characterization or environmental monitoring. (See also B3.1 of appendix B to this subpart.) |
| <b>B3.3 Research related to conservation of fish, wildlife, and cultural resources</b> | Field and laboratory research, inventory, and information collection activities that are directly related to the conservation of fish and wildlife resources or to the protection of cultural resources, provided that such activities would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on fish and wildlife habitat or populations or to cultural resources.   |

**Rationale for determination:**

DOE is proposing to provide funding to the University of Minnesota to conduct a research project to assess auditory sensitivity in golden and bald eagles in order to aid in the establishment of acoustic deterrence methodologies designed to reduce collisions with wind turbines. The project would ultimately provide information to technology development communities, specifically those involved in developing detection and deterrence technologies at wind plants, hydropower facilities, airports and other structures.

Proposed project tasks include (1) project management, (2) finalizing the research design and test setup, (3) measurement of auditory response in eagles and red-tail hawks, (4) measurement of vocalizations and behavioral response to auditory stimuli, and (5) data analysis.

The proposed project would involve characterizing the hearing ability of bald and golden eagles and red-tailed hawks (as eagle surrogates). Birds that are already held as specialized raptor facilities, with proper certification and permitting, would be tested under controlled research protocols. During a test, a bird would be sedated and examined within a laboratory environment. Each test would last approximately 60 minutes. Testing would occur in several locations around the country at locations that house eagles and hawks.

All project activities would be conducted in dedicated laboratories and purpose built facilities. The proposed testing would occur in several locations that currently house eagles and hawks. In addition to The Raptor Center (owned and operated by the recipient), work may be completed at Sia: The Comanche Nation Ethno Ornithological Initiative (a tribally owned and operated aviary in Cyril, Oklahoma), and/or The Montana Raptor Conservation Center (a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with facilities in Bozeman, Montana).

The project team has the required Scientific Collecting Permits, administered by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), to conduct the proposed work. Further, the recipient will coordinate with USFWS prior to initiating the proposed testing. The University of Minnesota's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee will be reviewing and approving the proposed animal care protocols. Additionally, veterinary staff would participate in all studies to ensure health and safety of the birds and researchers.

Based on the review of the proposal, DOE has determined the proposal fits within the class of action(s) and the integral elements of Appendix B to Subpart D of 10 CFR 1021 outlined in the DOE categorical exclusion(s) selected above. DOE has also determined that: (1) there are no extraordinary circumstances (as defined by 10 CFR 1021.410 (2)) related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal; (2) the

proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion; and (3) the proposal is not connected to other actions with potentially significant impacts, related to other proposals with cumulatively significant actions, or an improper interim action. This proposal is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

**NEPA PROVISION**

DOE has made a final NEPA determination for this award

Insert the following language in the award:

If the Recipient intends to make changes to the scope or objective of this project, the Recipient is required to contact the Project Officer, identified in Block 15 of the Assistance Agreement before proceeding. The Recipient must receive notification of approval from the DOE Contracting Officer prior to commencing with work beyond that currently approved. If the Recipient moves forward with activities that are not authorized for Federal funding by the DOE Contracting Officer in advance of a final NEPA decision, the Recipient is doing so at risk of not receiving Federal funding and such costs may not be recognized as allowable cost share.

Note to Specialist :

Wind Program  
This NEPA determination does not require a tailored NEPA provision.

**SIGNATURE OF THIS MEMORANDUM CONSTITUTES A RECORD OF THIS DECISION.**

NEPA Compliance Officer Signature:  Date: 3/16/2017  
NEPA Compliance Officer

**FIELD OFFICE MANAGER DETERMINATION**

Field Office Manager review required

**NCO REQUESTS THE FIELD OFFICE MANAGER REVIEW FOR THE FOLLOWING REASON:**

- Proposed action fits within a categorical exclusion but involves a high profile or controversial issue that warrants Field Office Manager's attention.
- Proposed action falls within an EA or EIS category and therefore requires Field Office Manager's review and determination.

**BASED ON MY REVIEW I CONCUR WITH THE DETERMINATION OF THE NCO :**

Field Office Manager's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Field Office Manager